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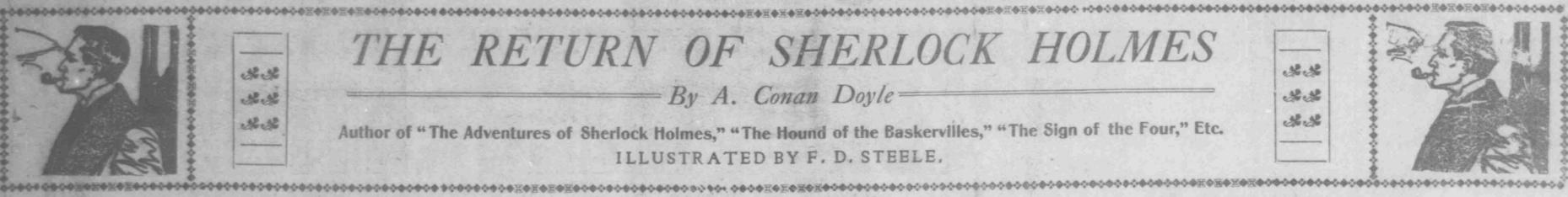
THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

= By A. Conan Doyle=

Author of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," "The Hound of the Baskervilles," "The Sign of the Four," Etc. ILLUSTRATED BY F. D. STEELE.

does that door lead to?"

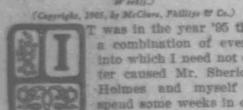




the Three Students

No. 9 of the Series

(Cappeight, 1904, by d. Conun Duyle and Callter's Weekly.)



was in the year '95 that left it?" said he. a combination of events ter caused Mr. Sherlock that?" spend some weeks in one statement." of our great university

my statement to avoid such terms as lows,

known him to be restless in his man- a fresh point to it." ner, but on this particular occasion he "Excellent!" said Holmes, who was the room. was in such a state of uncontrollable recovering his good humor as his atagitation that it was clear something tention became more engrossed by the

very unusual had occurred.

law is evoked it cannot be stayed again, and this is just one of those cases where, for the credit of the college, it is most essential to avoid scandal. Your discretion is as well known as your powers, and you are the one man in the world who can help me. I beg you, Mr. Holmes, to do what you

My friend's temper had not improved since he had been deprived of the congenial sucroundings of Baker treet. Without his scrapbook, his bemicals and his homely untidiness he was an uncomfortable man. He rugged his shoulders in ungracious acquiescence, while our visitor in hurried words and with much excitable gesticulation poured forth his story.

"I must explain to you, Mr. Holmes, that tomorrow is the first day of the examination for the Fortescue scholarship. I am one of the examiners. My subject is Greek, and the first of the papers consists of a large passage of Greek translation which the candidate has not seen. This passage is printed on the examination paper, and it would naturally be an immense ad-Nantage if the candidate could prepare It in advance. For this reason great care is taken to keep the paper secret.

"Today about 3 o'clock the proofs of this paper arrived from the printers. The exercise consists of half a chapter of Thuerdides. I had to read it over curefully, as the text must be absolutely correct. At 4:30 my task was not yet completed. I had, however, promised to take ten in a friend's Copyright by Collier's Weekly. rooms, so I left the proof upon my Besk. I was absent more than an hour.

our college doors are double-a green identity. I was at my wits' ends when and the plece remaining is only about "Yes, there are." without? As I approached my outer me that you were in the town, and I a pencil, Mr. Soames, and you have got tion?" door I was amused to see a key in it. came straight round to put the matter your man. When I add that he pos-For an instant I imagined that I had into your hands. Do help me, Mr. sesses a large and very blunt knife you "Have you any reason to suspect any He was pacing swiftly up and down case without it. By Jove, my dear felleft my own there, but on feeling in my Holmes. You see my dilemma. Either I have an additional aid." The only duplicate which existed, so then must be postponed until fresh pa whelmed by this flood of information. "It is a very delicate question," said of them," said Holmes. "Is it possi- with your eternal tobacco, Watson, and but now I know that you have lied." far as I knew, was that which belonged pers are prepared, and since this cannot "I can follow the other points," said he. "One hardly likes to throw suss to my servant, Bannister, a man who be done without explanation there will be, "but, realiy, in this matter of the picion where there are no proofs." has looked after my room for ten years ensue a hideous scandal which will length"-I found that the key was but on the university. Above all things the letters NN and a space of clear "I will tell you, then, in a few words unusual for visitors to go over them. problem of the nervous tutor, the careindeed his, that he had entered my I desire to settle the matter quietly and | wood after them. room to know if I wanted ten and that discreetly." he had very carelessly left the key in "I shall be happy to look into it and "No. I fear that even now"the door when he came out. His visit to give you such advice as I can," said | "Watson. I have always done you an athlete; plays in the Rugby team and we knocked at Gilchrist's door. A tall, the matter that day, though he sat lost I am going to ask you to have the to my room must have been within a Holmes, rising and putting on his over injustice. There are others. What the cricket team for the college and flaxen haired, slim young fellow opened in thought for a long time after our berery few minutes of my leaving it. His coat. "The case is not entirely devoid could this NN be? It is at the end of a got his blue for the hurdles and the it and made us welcome when he unforgetfulness about the key would have of interest. Had any one visited you in word. You are aware that Johann long jump. He is a fine, manly fellow. derstood our errand. There were some came into my room just as I finished mattered little upon any other occas your room after the papers came to Faher is the most common maker's His father was the notorious Sir Jahez really curious pieces of mediaeval do- my tollet. sion, but on this one day it has pro- you?" droed the most deplorable couse was so charmed with one of them that we went down to St. Luke's. Can you MEDCES.

The Adventure of was aware that some one had rum- about the examination." maged among my papers. The proof was in three long slips. I had left them all together. Now I found that one of them was lying on the floor, one |ble?" and the third was where I had left it."

Holmes stirred for the first time. "The first page on the floor, the second in the window, the third where you

"Exactly, Mr. Holmes. You amaze into which I need not me. How could you possibly know would be there?"

Holmes and myself to "Pray continue your very interesting

"For an instant I imagined that Bantowns, and it was during this time that pister had taken the unpardonable libthe small but instructive adventure erty of examining my papers. He de- left him collapsed in the chair, I was "To my bedroom." which I am about to relate befell us. nied it, however, with the utmost ear- in such a hurry to come to you." It will be obvious that any details nestness, and I am convinced that he "You left your door open?" which would help the reader to exact- was speaking the truth. The alternaly identify the college or the criminal tive was that some one passing had obed, since it serves to illustrate some of very valuable one, and an unscrupulous ing that they were there." those qualities for which my friend man might very well run a risk in or- "So it seems to me." was remarkable. I will endeavor in der to gain an advantage over his fel- Holmes gave an enigmatic smile.

would serve to limit the events to any "Bannister was very much upset by Not one of your cases, Watson-men- too low and the wardrobe too shallow. business, Bannister," said his master, particular place or give a clew as to the incident. He had nearly fainted tal, not physical. All right; come if No one there, I suppose?" when we found that the papers had you want to. Now, Mr. Soames, at As Holmes drew the current I was We were residing at the time in fur- undoubtedly been tampered with. I your disposal." nished lodgings close to a library where gave him a little brandy and left him The sitting room of our client opened alertness of his attitude that he was "Yes, sir." I soon saw that the intruder had left old college. A Gothic arched door led sults so striking that they may be the other traces of his presence besides the to a worn stone staircase. On the subject of one of my future narratives. rumpled papers. On the table in the ground floor was the tutor's room. Here it was that one evening we re-, window were several shreds from a Above were three students, one on ceived a visit from an acquaintance, pencil which had been sharpened. A each story. It was already twilight Mr. Hilton Soames, tutor and lecturer broken tip of lead was lying there also. when we reached the scene of our at the College of St. I ake's, Mr. Soames Evidently the rascal had copied the problem. Holmes halted and looked was a tall spare man, of a nervous and paper in a great hurry, had broken his earnestly at the window; then he apexcitable temperament. I had always pencil and had been compelled to put proached it, and, standing on tiptoe

"I trust, Mr. Holmes, that you can "This was not all, I have a new "Door woll cold Universely spare me a few hours of your valuable writing table with a fine surface of time. We have had a very painful in- red leather. I am prepared to swear, cident at St. Luke's, and really, but and so is Bannister, that it was smooth for the happy chance of your being in and unstained. Now I found a clean best go inside." town, I should have been at a loss cut in it about three inches long-not a mere scratch, but a positive cut. Not "I am very busy just now, and I de only this, but on the table I found a eire no distractions," my friend an small ball of black dough or clay, with swered. "I should much prefer that specks of something which looks like made an examination of the carpet. you called in the aid of the police." sawdust in it. I am convinced that here," said he. "One could hardly clothes hanging from a line of pegs. "No, no, my dear sir; such a course these marks were left by the man who is utterly impossible. When once the rifled the papers. There were no foot-



balze one within and a heavy oak one suddenly the happy thought occurred to an inch and a half long. Look for such "And they are all in for this examina- restless enough." pocket I found that it was all right. must find the man or else the examina. Mr. Sonmes was somewhat over- Soames hesitated. ely above throw a cloud not only on the college, Holmes held out a small chip with look after the proofs."

"The moment I looked at my table I came in to ask me some particulars | small table sideways to the electric dustrious. He will do well. "For which he was entered?"

"Yes."

rolled up." "But might be recognized as proofs?"

"Possibly." "No one else in your room?" "No."

"Did any one know that these proofs

"No one save the printer." "Did this man Bannister know?" "No; certainly not. No one knew." "Where is Bannister now?"

"He was very ill, poor fellow! I

"I locked up the papers first." "Then it amounts to this, Mr. "I should like to have a glance ter." would be injudicious and offensive. So served the key in the door, had known Soames, that, unless the Indian student round. What a charming, old fashion He was a little, white faced, clean very uncourteous and, indeed, under painful a scandal may well be allowed that I was out and had entered to look recognized the roll as being proofs, the ed room! Perhaps you will kindly shaven, grizzly haired fellow of fifty. the circumstances rather suspicious." to die out. With due discretion the in- at the papers. A large sum of money man who tampered with them came wait a minute until I have examined He was still suffering from this sudcident itself may, however, be describ- is at stake, for the scholarship is a upon them accidentally without know- the floor. No, I see nothing. What den disturbance of the quiet routine of

with his neck craned, he looked into

"He must have entered through the case. "Fortune has been your friend." door. There is no opening except the

"Dear me!" said Holmes, and he smiled in a singular way as he glanced at our companion. "Well, if there is nothing to be learned here we had

The lecturer unlocked the outer door Copyright by and ushered us into his room. We stood at the entrance while Holmes

"I am afraid there are no signs ed nothing but three or four suits of servant seems to have quite recovered. denly to the floor. You left him in a chair, you say. Which chair?"

"By the window there."

with the carpet. Let us take the lit- glare of the electric light. tie table first. Of course what has "Your visitor seems to have left "Where was I, sir? Why, here, near happened is very clear. The man en- traces in your bedroom as well as in the door." tered and took the papers, sheet by your sitting room, Mr. Soames." came across the courtyard and so he had no warning until you were at | "I don't know, sir. It didn't matter do it when they are trying to learn into a small private court mantial. You could effect an escape."

said Soames, "for I entered by the tray him, and he rushed into your bed- about it, Mr. Holmes. He was looking came in on you when you were pre-

side door." was in his mind. Let me see the three mean to tell me that all the time I was left?" Well, he carried over this one first, and had the man prisoner if we had only ed the door and went to my room." he copied it. How long would it take known it?" him to do that, using every possible "So I read it." ed the next. He was in the midst of that you observed my bedroom window?" profiting by such an action. No, sir; ly honest man." when your return caused him to make | "Lattice paned, lead framework, I'll not believe it." a very hurried retreat-very hurried, three separate windows, one swinging "Thank you; that will do," said part. Why should a perfectly honest papers which would te'l you that he man." of any burrying feet on the stair as angle of the courtyard so as to be thing is amiss?" you entered the outer door?"

"No, I can't say I was." "Well, he wrote so furiously that he as he passed through the bedroom, and "No, sir." serve, to sharpen it again. This is of caped that way." interest, Watson. The pencil was not | Holmes shook his head impatiently. an ordinary one. It was above the "Let us be practical," said he. "I

partly invisible. The man might have "No, sir; not a word."

room to conceal himself."

Daulat Ras.

"Hello! What's this?" said he.

usual size, with a soft lead, the understand you to say that there are above us in the gathering gloom. outer color was dark blue, the maker's three students who use this stair and "Your three birds are all in their shoulders in half humorous resigna- unable to prove it. But it seems prob-You are aware, Mr. Holmes, that marks and no other evidence as to his name was printed in silver lettering, are in the habit of passing your door?" nests," said Holmes, looking up. "Hel-tion,

one of them more than the others?"

the character of the three men who in- Come along, and I will personally con- less servant and the three enterprising ther information. Would you please habit these rooms. The lower of the duct you." three is Gilchrist, a fine scholar and "No names, please!" said Holmes as Holmes made no further allusion to name. Is it not clear that there is just Glichrist, who ruined himself on the mestic architecture within. Holmes "Well, Watson," said he, "it is time

light. "I was hoping that if the paper "The second floor is inhabited by one from our host and finally borrowed "Soames will be in a dreadful fidget on which he wrote was thin some trace Daulat Ras, the Indian. He is a a knife to sharpen his own, The same until we are able to tell him something. of it might come through upon this pol- quiet, inscrutable fellow, as most of curious accident happened to him in positive." "And the papers were on your ta- ished surface. No, I see nothing. I those Indians are. He is well up in the rooms of the Indian-a silent little "Have you anything positive to tell don't think there is anything more to his work, though his Greek is his weak hook nosed fellow, who eyed us askance him?" was on the side table near the window "To the best of my belief they were be learned here. Now for the central subject. He is steady and methodical, and was obviously glad when Holmes' "I think so."

table. This small pellet is, I presume, "The top floor belongs to Miles Me- architectural studies had come to an "You have formed a conclusion?" the black, doughy mass you spoke of. Laren. He is a brilliant fellow when end. I could not see that in either case "Yes, my dear Watson; I have solved Roughly pyramidal in shape and hol- he chooses to work-one of the bright- Holmes had come upon the clew for the mystery." with a jagged hole. I am much in- look forward with dread to the ex- from behind it. "I don't care who you debted to you for directing my atten- amination."

tion to this case, Mr. Soames. Where "Then it is he whom you suspect?" angry voice. "Tomorrow's the exam., "I dare not go so far as that, but of and I won't be drawn by any one." "Have you been in it since your ad- likely."

"No, I came straight'away for you." have a look at your servant, Bannis- realize that it was I who was knock-

about this curtain? You hang your his life. His plump face was twitching he asked. clothes behind it. If any one were with his nervousness, and his fingers forced to conceal himself in this room | could not keep still.

"I understand," said Holmes, "that Holmes. "And now, Mr. Soames, I aware from some little rigidity and you left your key in the door?"

at other times."

"When dld you enter the room?" "It was about half past 4. That is held if one of the papers has been tam-Mr. Soames' tea time.'

"How long did you stay?" withdrew at once."

"No. sir; certainly not." the door?" "I had the tea tray in my hand. I "Very good, Mr. Holmes."

key. Then I forgot." "Has the outer door a spring lock?" "No. sir."

"Then it was open all the time?" "Yes, sir."

"Yes, sir."

hope for any upon so dry a day. Your Holmes turned away and stooped sud- called for you, you were very much disturbed?"

can come in now. I have finished held it out on his open palm in the "So I understand. Where were you It must be one of them. You take examination proceed?"

when you began to feel bad?"

sheet, from the central table. He car- "What could he have wanted there?" down in that chair over yonder near also. Why should he be pacing his rled them over to the window table, "I think it is clear enough. You came the corner. Why did you pass these

the very door. What could he do? He to me where I sat." "As a matter of fact he could not," caught up everything which would be- "I really don't think he knew much

very bad-quite ghastly." "Ah, that's good! Well, anyhow, that "Good gracious, Mr. Holmes, do you "You stayed here when your master

strips. No finger impressions-no! talking to Bannister in this room we "Only for a minute or so; then I lock knives-all was satisfactory. But that in evident surprise and fear at our ju-"Whom did you suspect?"

contraction? A quarter of an hour, not "Surely there is another alternative, I don't believe there is any gentleman his game in the matter?" less. Then he tossed it down and seiz- Mr. Holmes. I don't know whether in this university who is capable of "He impressed me as being a perfect- day's incident?"

since he had not time to replace the on hinge and large enough to admit a Holmes. "Oh, one more word. You man-well, well, here's a large stationhad been there. You were not aware "Exactly. And it looks out on an gentlemen whom you attend that any-

effected his entrance there, left traces | "You haven't seen any of them?"

you please. Three yellow squares of light shone My friend did not appear to be depress-

"Let us hear the suspicions. I will answered. "This set of rooms is quite that I shall share your downfall-not,

student, who lives on the same stair, follows the Johann?" He held the poor, but he insisted on drawing it in his note do without breakfast?"

lowed out, I perceive. As you say, est intellects of the university-but he which he was searching. Only at the "But what fresh evidence could you. there appear to be grains of sawdust in is wayward, dissipated and unprinci- third did our visit prove abortive. The have got?" it. Dear me, this is very interesting. pled. He was nearly expelled over a outer door would not open to our "Aha! It is not for nothing that I And the cut-a positive tear, I see. It card scandal in his first year. He has knock and nothing more substantial have turned myself out of bed at the began with a thin scratch and ended been idling all this term, and he must than a torrent of bad language came untimely hour of 6. I have put in two

> the three he is perhaps the least un- "A rude fellow!" said our guide, flushing with anger as we withdrew "Exactly. Now, Mr. Soames, let us down the stair. "Of course he did not ing, but none the less his conduct was

are. You can go to blazes!" roared the

Holmes' response was a curious one. "Can you tell me his exact height?"

"Really, Mr. Holmes, I cannot undertake to say. He is taller than the "Well," said he, "let us go round. he must do it there, since the bed is | "We are investigating this unhappy Indian, not so tall as Gilchrist. I suppose five foot six would be about it." "That is very important," said

wish you good night." Our guide cried aloud in his aston-Sheriock Holmes was pursuing some collapsed in a chair, while I made a by a long, low, latticed window on to prepared for an emergency. As a matlaborious researches in early English most careful examination of the room. the ancient lichen tinted court of the ter of fact, the drawn curtain disclos- you should do this on the very day Mr. Holmes, you are surely not gowhen there were these papers inside?" ing to leave me in this abrupt fashion: "It was most unfortunate, sir. But I You don't seem to realize the position. Copyright by Collier's Weekly. have occasionally done the same thing Tomorrow is the examination. I must cannot allow the examination to be hours' hard work and covered at least take some definite action tonight. I'

> faced." "When I saw that he was absent, I "You must leave It as it is. I shall drop round early tomorrow morning "Did you look at these papers on the and chat the matter over. It is possible that I may be in a position then terday." to indicate some course of action.

ing at all."

thought I would come back for the "You can be perfectly easy in your and put friend Soames out of his pain." mind. We shall certainly find some way out of your difficulties. I will in a state of pitiable agitation when we

pencil cuttings. Goodby."

"Well, Watson, what do you think tation, and he ran toward Holmes with "Yes, sir. Such a thing has never of it?" Holmes asked as we came out two eager hands outstretched. It was a small pyramid of black, happened during the many years that into the main street. "Quite a little It was a small pyramid of black, happened during the many years that into the main street. I feared that you had given it up in puttylike stuff, exactly like the one I have been here. I nearly fainted, parlor game—sort of three czrd trick. I feared that you had given it up in puttylike stuff, exactly like the one I have been here. I nearly fainted, parlor game—sort of three czrd trick. I feared that you had given it up in it is it not? There are your three men.

> "The foul mouthed fellow at the top, He is the one with the worst record. "That is singular, because you sat And yet that Indian was a sly fellow

"He looked at us in a queer way." paring for an examination next day into a guilty breast. Kindly ring the and every moment was of value. No, | bell!" I see nothing in that. Pencils, too, and fellow does puzzle me."

"So he did me. That's the puzzling his hair.

have not mentioned to any of the three er's. We shall begin our researches and bid high for a duplicate. All were would have shown who had been in

broke his pencil, and had, as you ob- finally, finding the door open, have es- "Very good. Now, Mr. Soames, we agreed that one could be ordered, but the room?" will take a walk in the quadrangle, if that it was not a usual size of pencil and that it was seldom kept in stock.

It was the Indian, whose dark silhou- nothing. But, indeed, I have little ette appeared suddenly upon his blind. doubt that we can build up a sufficient low, it is nearly 9, and the landlady "I should like to have a peep at each babbled of green peas at 7:30. What your irregularity at meals, I expect "No difficulty in the world," Soames that you will get notice to quit and "There was no man, sir." the oldest in the college, and it is not however, before we have solved the students."

book, broke his pencil, had to borrow "Certainly."



Miles McLaren.

pered with. The situation must be it." Look at that!" He held out his hand. On the palm were three little pyramids of black, doughy clay.

"Why, Holmes, you had only two yes-

"And one more this morning. It is a "How came you to leave the key in Meanwhile, you change nothing-noth- fair argument that wherever No. 3 came from is also the source of Nos. 1 and 2. Eh, Watson? Well, come along

The unfortunate tutor was certainly take the black clay with me; also the found him in his chambers. In a few hours the examination would com-When we were out in the darkness mence, and he was still in the dilemma "Any one in the room could get out?" of the quadrangle we again looked up between making the facts public and at the windows. The Indian still pac- allowing the culprit to compete for the "When Mr. Soames returned and ed his room. The others were in- valuable scholarship. He could hardly stand still, so great was his mental agi-

"Thank heaven that you have come!

"Yes, let it proceed, by all means." "But this rasoal"-

"He shall not compete."

"You know him?" "I think so. If this matter is not ba become public we must give ourselves "There is nothing in that. Many men, certain powers and resolve ourselves you here! I'll take the armchair in "So would you if a flock of strangers | the middle. I think that we are now

> Bannister entered and shrank back dicial appearance.

"You will kindly close the door," said "Oh. I would not venture to say, sir. "Why, Bannister, the servant. What's Holmes. "Now, Bannister, will you please tell us the truth about yester-The man turned white to the roots of

"I have told you everything, sir."

"Nothing to add?" "Nothing at all, sir." "Well, then, I must make some sug-There were only four stationers of gestions to you. When you sat down any consequence in the town, and at on that chair yesterday did you do so each Holmes produced his pencil chips in order to conceal some object which

Bannister's face was ghastly.

"No. sir; certainly not." "It is only a suggestion," said Holmes ed by his failure, but shrugged his suavely. "I frankly admit that I am able enough, since the moment that lo! What's that? One of them seems | "No good, my dear Watson. This, the Mr. Soames' back was turned you rebest and only final clew, has run to leased the man who was hiding in that

bedroom." Bannister licked his dry lips.

"There was no man, sir." "Ah, that's a pity, Bannister. Up to now you may have spoken the truth,

The man's face set in sullen defiance.

"Come, come, Bannister!" "No. sir: there was no one." remain in the room? Stand over mere near the bedroom door. Now, Soames,

young Gilchrist and to ask him to step down into yours." An instant later the tutor returned,

great kindness to go up to the room of

(Continued on Tenth Page)